(c) As in statement I (*See* below).

(d) As in statement II.

STATEMENT I

THE STEPS TAKEN ARE AS GIVEN BELOW :—

1. Replacement of manual and electro-mechanical exchanges by electronic exchanges.

2. Installing new electronic exchanges on large scale.

3. Providing adequate capacity power plant and stand by power supply. Use of non-conventional power energy like solar energy etc. wherever feasible in cases where normal electric supply is not satisfactory.

4. Providing stable media for the circuits linking the rural exchange to the parent exchange.

5. Providing sufficient circuits to porvide STD and group dialling facilities.

6. Provision of upgraded outdoor plant for subs-lines and providing long distance public telephones and long distances connections on radio systems like M A R R.

STATEMENT II

Yes, Sir. MAX-III electro-mechanical exchanges in the rural areas are proposed to be converted into modernised electronic exchanges and to provide STD facility to these rural exchanges progressively including Andhra Pradesh Telecom Circle subject to the availability of resources.

VIABILITY OF EASTERN ZONAL CORPORATION

2490. SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR SAHU: Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Zonalising the existing telecom set-up arrived at by indepth study at different levels have created doubt about the viability of the proposed Eastern Zonal Corporation;

(b) which are the states being included under different telecom operating zones proposed for the country ; and

(c) what are the viability prospects for Eastern Zone and what is the long term plan in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM) : (a) to (c) Do not arise at present as the various aspects of the reorganisation of the Department of Telecommunications including financial viability in the event of zonalisation are still being studied.

BOOM IN TRAFFIC OF POST CARDS

2491. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD : Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware (Economic Times dt. 28th November, 1993) of an unmanageable boom in the traffic of post cards in the wake of cultural|quiz programmes beamed on TV networks:

(b) if so, how much expenditure Government incur against the cost of 15 paise per Post Cards on handling each articles and the cummulative losses estimated for an year; and

(c) whether Government would consider banning of Post Cards for commercial purposes including quiz|contest programmes at the subsidised rate of 15 paise and levy the commercial rate of 60 paise from users ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM) : (a) While it is known that postcards are used extensively for Quiz competitions broadcast on television, there is no report of unmanageable boom in traffic of postcards.